DEMAND VII—EXCISE.

MR. M. P. JOSEPH: Sir, I beg to move for a supplementary grant of Rs. 1,345 towards expenditure for the pay of some additional clerks to be entertained in my office in the Statistical Branch, which is to be reorganised, as also Rs. 2,500 towards construction of some buildings for the Palkulam Salt Factory. In making this Demand I think it proper to explain to the House the reasons for making the first part of the demand.

In view of the importance of customs and trade statistics for trade in general, and for solving several problems connected with the Interportal Convention, Federation and the Cochin Harbour Scheme, the Government thought it necessary to have a trained staff to compile statistics. A temporary staff of 8 clerks was sanctioned for this purpose, and they were working in my office from 1108. The work done by them was found to be ineffective and inadequate; and therefore, the Head Accountant of my Office was sent to British India to study what is obtaining in important Customs Houses at Karachi and Bombay and also to the Office of the Director of Commercial Intelligence, Calcutta, to get first-hand training in compiling statistics. As soon as he returned he was appointed as Statistics Officer. As the work done by the clerks in my office was found to be inadequate, Mr. Krishna Iyer was ordered to prepare a report for the reorganisation of the Statistical Branch. Accordingly, he prepared a report and submitted that 39 clerks were necessary for doing the work in the Statistical Branch. That report was submitted by my predecessor Mr. Nilakanta Iyer when he was Excise Commissioner. Mr. Nilakanta Iyer studied the report, scrutinised it very carefully and tried to reduce the staff as much as possible, and brought it down to 17 clerks. Under this Scheme, the Statistical Branch in my Office is split up into two, the Statistics Branch, and the Audit Branch. In the Statistics branch, the proposal was to appoint 13 clerks, and for the Audit branch, 4 clerks. The work of the Statistics Branch consists in posting and registration of returns which are received in my Office from the 73 Customs Houses in the State. We are receiving about 600 manifests, declarations, shipping bills, bills of entry, etc., in my office daily. These have to be compiled and monthly and annual returns have to be prepared out of them. 10 clerks out of the 13 will be engaged in posting these returns. One clerk will do the registration, and the other miscellaneous work. Two clerks will be fully engaged in the compilation of monthly and annual statistics.

My friend Mr. Janardhana Pillai will agree with me how important statistics is for the trade in general apart from its importance to Government in its negotiations with British India and other countries who have commercial relations with Travancore. The staff proposed for this purpose is the irreducible minimum.

Now, in the Audit Branch in the Statistical Section, in the proposal is to have 4 clerks. At present, the audit of customs revenue is done by

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the Assistant Excise Commissioners during their periodical inspections. This was found to be unsatisfactory and inadequate I had sent my Statistical Officer to several of the Customs Houses to find out leakages of revenue. Every time he went he found out some leakage. Under these circumstances, it is proposed to have trained staff who have some practical working knowledge of Sea Customs and Land Customs law to audit the Customs Revenue. We have been able to collect about Rs. 2,000 by this occasional audit. These men will go round the several Customs Houses and do audit work. There is a lump sum provision of about Rs. 3,000 for the reorganised scheme. Out of this, the pay of the seven clerks of my office has to be met. There is a balance of about Rs. 1,330. A sum of Rs. 1,345 is required for meeting the pay of the remaining clerks. I may add that this matter was discussed threadbare in the Finance Committee. I was cross-examined and re-examined.

PRESIDENT: The proceedings of the Finance Committee cannot be disclosed here.

MR. M. P. JOSEPH: All that I wish to say is, that this matter was threshed in the Finance Committee. I may assure the members that the money which you are asked to vote now, will not be wasted, ill-spent, and that it will bring additional revenue to Government. I put the motion for the acceptance of this House.

PRESIDENT: The motion before the House is that a sum of Rs. 3,845 be granted under Demand VII—Excise, for the reorganisation of the Statistics Branch in the Excise Commissioners Office, and for the construction of buildings for holding the office and the Guard Posts in the Palkulam Salt Factory.

The Demand was put to vote and carried. The grant was made.

DEMAND XVII—INDUSTRIES—INCLUDING CLAY REFINING AND PORCELAIN FACTORY.

MR. G. B. E. TRUSCOTT: Sir, I move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 30,000 in the Budget of the Ceramic Factory for completing the works allotted to the P. W. D. at Kundara, and for paying for the works already completed but not paid for. As it was expected that the work of construction would be completed before the end of 1113 no provision was made for this work in the budget for the year 1114. For these reasons I request that the members will be pleased to sanction this Demand.

MR. E. P. VARGHESE: May I know what amount was spent last year for this work?

MR. G. B. E. TRUSCOTT: The total estimated cost of the construction of the several buildings including wharf and jetty for the Clay Refining and Porcelain Factory at Kundara, amounts to Rs. 1,67,982.

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